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Doughboy Ballads



*Written by service men
during the Great War.*

Doughboy Ballads

Rhymes written by service men during
the Great War



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FOREWORD

THE contents of "Doughboy Ballads" are rhymes composed by service men during the war. They were written by men in every branch of the service, and while they may not be gems of literary excellence, they portray in an effective manner the thoughts of our fighting men while undergoing the hardships of war times. In quest of material, the publishers encountered hundreds of rhymes on every conceivable subject of interest at that time, but the following poems were adjudged to be a representative group.

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no 1

“We’ve Done Our Hitch in Hell”

I am sitting here a-thinking of the things I left behind,
And I hate to put on paper what is running through my mind.
We’ve dug a million trenches and chased ten miles of ground,
And meaner place this side of hell I know is still unfound,
But there’s one great consolation, gather close while I tell,
When we die we’ll go to Heaven, for we’ve done our hitch in Hell.

We’ve built a hundred kitchens for the cook to bake our beans,
We’ve stood a hundred guard mounts and cleaned up the
camp latrines;
We’ve washed a million mess kits and peeled a million spuds,
We’ve rolled a million blanket rolls and washed a million duds.
The number of parades we’ve made would be very hard to tell,
But we’ll not parade in Heaven, for we’ve done our hitch in Hell.

We’ve killed a million German snakes that tried to take our cots;
We’ve shaken scores of centipedes from out our army socks;
We’ve marched a hundred thousand miles and made a thousand
camps,
And pulled a million cactus thorns from out our army pants;
But when our work on earth is done, our friends will surely tell,
“When they die they go to Heaven, for they’ve done their
hitch in Hell.”

The final taps are sounding and we lay aside life’s cares,
And we do our last parading up the shining golden stairs,
And the angels bid us welcome and the harps begin to play,
And we draw a million canteen checks and spend them in a day.
’Tis then we’ll hear St. Peter tell us loudly with a yell:
“Take a front seat, Engineer, for you’ve done your hitch in Hell.”

Just Thinking

Standing up here on the fire step
A-looking ahead in the mist,
With a tin hat over your ivory
And a rifle clenched in your fist;
Waiting, watching, wondering,
If the Huns are coming over tonight.
Say! Aren’t the things that you think of
Enough to give you a fright?

Things you haven't even thought of
For a couple of months or more;
Things that would set you laughing,
Things that would make you sore;
Things that you've seen in the movies;
Things that you've seen on the street;
Things that you really are fond of,
Things that are not so sweet;

Debts that are past collecting,
Stories you hear and forget;
Ball games and birthday parties,
And hours of drill in the wet;
Headlines, recruiting and posters,
Sunsets way out at sea;
Evenings of paydays—golly!
It's a queer thing, this memory.

Faces of pals in the home burg,
Voices of women folks;
Verses you've learned in school days,
Pop up in the mist and the smoke
As you stand there gripping that rifle,
A-starving and chilled to the bone,
Wondering, wondering and wondering,
Just thinking there all alone.

When will the war be over?
When will the gang break through?
What will the old U. S. A. look like?
What will there be to do?
Where will the Boche be then?
Who will have married who? Well,
When's that relief coming up?
Gosh, but this thinking's hell!

Gettin' Letters

When you're far away from home an' you're feelin' kind of blue,
When the world is topsy turvy, nothin' sets jest right fer you,
Yuh can sneer at all yer troubles, an' yer cares yuh never mind
When you've really had a letter from the Girl yuh left behind.

When the cook is downright nutty, an' his biscuits never raise,
When he feeds yuh canned tomatoes fer jest seventeen straight
days,

Yuh can quite fergit he's nutty, yuh can treat him fairly kind
If you've really had a letter from the Girl yuh left behind.

When the Captain's got a grouch on, an' has bawled yuh out fer fair,
When some pesky Lieut has sassed yuh, which to home he
wouldn't dare,

Yuh can lift yer chin an' whistle, an' that's easy yuh will find
If you've really had a letter from the Girl yuh left behind

When a letter comes yuh grab it, right before the other guys,
An' yuh get a little vision of the light that's in Her eyes;
Yuh can see Her smiles an' dimples, an' fer other girls yer blind,
When you've really had a letter from the Girl yuh left behind.

Jest a sheet or two of paper, with a purple stamp or two,
But it means the whole creation to the heart an' soul of you,
An' yuh git to feelin' pious, an' yuh pray a bit, yuh mind,
Fer the Great Almighty's blessin' on the Girl yuh left behind.

On Guard

I've done some dirty diggin' and I've toted heavy loads,
I've marched for many miles a day on slimy, muddy roads;
I've loaded trucks and chopped up wood and thought it mighty hard,
But I'd sooner do them all at once than have to go on guard.

They worked me in the kitchens till it tried my utmost soul,
And then I joined the firing squad—the one that shovels coal;
I've even picked up stumps and scraps around the barracks yard,
But I'd sooner do it all again than have to go on guard.

It's on those bitter, wintry nights—your backbone all a-chill,
And cursin' every German boob, and mostly Kaiser Bill,
'Tis then you know within your soul there's nothing quite so hard
As being routed out of bed to have to go on guard.

It's being out alone at night and walkin' up and down,
And speakin' not a word until the sergeant comes aroun',
And all the time a-thinkin' of your Susie or your Maud—
Yep! I'd sooner do most anything than have to go on guard.

Adieu

Here beneath the pines of Vendee,
'Neath the ever sifting sand,
Lie our comrades in their slumber
In a strange and foreign land.

Lie they here, their toil is over;
They have made the sacrifice.
Can we ever pay a homage
Half the equal of that price?

Only yesterday among us
Rang their voices loud and clear;
Now their lips are hushed forever
Just when victory is here.

We must go away and leave them
To the solace of the roar
Of waves that lash old Vendee;
To the storms that sweep her shore.

May their loved ones gain a comfort
In the knowledge that they lie
'Neath the soil they consecrated
That their nation might not die.

Sacred are these wooden crosses
Near that quaint old Vendee town;
They will never leave our memory
Even tho' they be moss grown.

Adieu Departed comrades,
Heads bowed down we offer prayer
That Our Father in His guidance
Will reward you "Over There."

Silver Threads Among the Gold (Revised)

Darling I am coming back,
Silver threads among the black.

Now that peace in Europe nears
I'll be home in seven years.

I'll drop in on you some night
With my whiskers long and white.

Yes, the war is over, dear,
And we are going home, I hear.

Home again with you once more—
Say, by nineteen twenty-four.

Once I thought by now I'd be
Sailing back across the sea.

Back to where you sit and pine,
But I'm headed for the Rhine.

You can hear old G-2 curse,
"War is Hell," but peace is worse.

When the next war comes around
In the front ranks I'll be found.

I'll rush in again pell mell—
Yes, I will—like hell, like hell.

We Wanna Go Home

You may walk in thru the squadrons,
Or the draft room or the shops,
And talk with skilled artisans,
With the cooks, K. P's or cops.
You may find them "twos ensemble,"
Or may find one all alone,
But you'll always hear the same desire:
"We wanna go home."

This has been a busy place here
In the good old days of yore,
When our lads were working day and night
To help win this great war,
When we finished maps for
Argonne, St. Mihiel and the Somme.
But now the damned war's over,
And we wanna go home.

When the call for men was sounded,
We were Johnny-on-the-spot.
And we drilled and hiked a-singing,
We were then a jolly lot.
And we did our bit a-smiling,
Ne'er a whimper, grouch or groan.
But now the job is finished,
And we wanna go home.

"We're a very high class personnel,"
These words were often told.
"And the 34th is known by all
The big guns, young and old,
In Brussels and in London,
In Paris and in Tome."
But who the hell cares for these small towns?
We wanna go home!

We have boys here from every state,
From Oregon to Maine,
And from Michigan to Texas,
From mountain, dell and plain.

From way down in Panama,
From right under the Capitol dome.
And every single mother's son
Says: "We wanna go home."

We left mothers, wives and sweethearts,
Brothers, sisters, friends and all;
And we parted, yes, most willingly,
To answer duty's call.
But our love it still remains there,
Miles and miles across the foam,
And we'll never be content here now,
For "We wanna go home."

An Ode to My Winterfield Uniform

O Winterfield, my Winterfield,
I really must confess,
You quite surpass most any class
Of uniform or dress!
And yet the shades of coat and pants,
Oh, uniform of mine,
Are brown and green, while in between,
There is a color line!

There's class to your patch pockets;
Still, I've reason to suppose
They call them patch because they match
Some other fellow's clothes.
And while across my tightened chest
I feel your buttons bind,
How could I fail to know the tail
Is flaring out behind!

Then when I'm walking through the town,
I hear the people say,
While giving me the up and down,
"What is he, anyway?
Is he one of the flying corps
A homeguard, engineer—
A Belgian or a Britisher
On furlough over here?"

O Winterfield, my Winterfield!
What'er your merits be,
You're good enough for Uncle Sam,
And good enough for me.
For though your pants were salmon pink,
Your coats were emerald green,
The man inside could say with pride,
"I'm a U. S. MARINE."

Let's Go

When a certain regiment of American doughboys departed from their billets in a little town back of the front and marched away to their trenches in Lorraine, this poem was found tacked up on a billet door.

By the rifle on my back,
By my old and well worn pack,
By the bayonets we sharpened in the billets down below,
When we're holding to a sector,
By the Holy Jumping Hector,
Colonel, we'll be Gott-strafed if the Blankteenth lets it go.
And the Boches big and small,
Runtz ones and Boches tall,
Won't keep your boys a-squatting in the ditches very long;
For we'll soon be busting through, Sir,
God help Fritzies when we do, Sir,
Let's be going, Colonel Blank, because we're feeling mighty strong.

Those Billets

With apologies to Mr. Kipling

I've taken my bunks where I've found 'em;
I've roughed it and ranged in my time;
I've had my pickin' of billets,
And three of the lot was prime.
One was the lot of a sheep barn,
Cold as the snow-fields at Nome;
One was a dungeon with windows all barred,
And one was an Adrian home.

No, I ain't had no luck with the billets,
For, takin' them all along,
You never can tell till you've tried 'em,
And then you are sure to be wrong;
There's times that you'll think there are worse ones,
There's times when you're sure that there ain't—
But the language you use in describin' 'em all
Is not quite becomin' a saint!

I was a greenhorn at Blankville;
New to my derby of tin,
Off to the sheep-barn they sent me,
And—Wow! It was draughty as sin!
Colder than Greenland, that first one,
It froze every time that you spit;
But we nested in straw when the weather was raw,
And I learned about billets from it!

Then we was ordered to Redroof
Put into quarters de luxe—
Adrian barracks the name was—
And there we was happy as ducks,
For the rain would come down through the ceilin',
The chimney and stove didn't fit,
So between smoke and showers,
We passed our spare hours;
And I learned about billets from it.

I've taken my bunks as I've found 'em,
The Government's paid for my keep;
The more that I see of French housing,
The less I am tempted to weep.
I'm used to it now, and I'm seasoned,
And so, in due time, will you be;
So don't grumble or curse—
Cause they all might be worse—
And learn about billets from me!

The Girl You Left Behind

I'm feeling pretty worried,
Over all the things I hear,
Of the shrapnel and the cannon
But the worst of all I fear,
Are the Zeppelins and the Aeroplanes,
And the dreadful Submarine,
Yet the fear of girls in Sunny France,
Is the fear that turns me green.

It's the fear of all the damsels,
You'll be meeting over there,
The Parisienne or the Belgian maid,
With her fascinating air,
So be a loyal lover,
Don't forsake the girl back home,
No matter how they smile on you,
Don't let your fancy roam.

O, the French girls, they are pretty,
And the nurses they are kind,
But do not be a traitor,
To the girl you left behind.
I know that you are loyal,
To the Red, White, and Blue,
And I know you'll prove faithful
To your sweetheart too.

Against the Huns they spell with "U"
You'll hold your own I know,
But I fear you may be ambushed,
By the Hons they spell with "O,"
So guard against temptations,
Don't surrender to their charms,
Just wait till you return to me
Before presenting arms.

Leave the French girls to the Frenchmen,
Leave the nurses to the Doc's,
For the soldier boy in Kahki,
Is the girl who knits his socks.
O, the French girls may be pretty,
And the nurses may be kind,
But remember first your duty,
To the girl you left behind.

Where Do I Sleep Next?

I've slept in the cradle, and I've slept in arms,
I was a baby then unconscious of war's alarms.
I've slept on steamboats with my bed on deck,
I've slept in churches with a knick in my neck.

I've slept in fields under the stars,
And I've slept on trains in old box cars,
I've slept in beds of purple and gold,
I've slept out in Flanders in mud and cold.

I've slept in dugouts with the rats and the louse,
And I've slept in France in a fairly good house.
I've slept in barns on beds of straw,
I've slept in sheds with no bed at all.

I've slept in billets on floors of brick,
I've slept in yards along side of the sick.
I've slept in most places where you can't get rest
And I've slept with those little gray things in my vest.

I'm sleeping now on stretchers of wire,
And pray my last sleep will be near a fire.
I'm tired of the wet, the mud and the cold,
And I won't be sorry when I sleep in the fold.

Sympathizing With Shep

“Dear Dad,” he wrote. “I’m here in France
And sharing in each Yank advance.
We’re driving back the filthy Hun;
The Heinies now are on the run,
And I am well and strong tonight
Except for little things that bite.

“Do you recall those happy days,
We sat before the log fire’s blaze
Within our parlor snug;
With Shep asleep upon the rug,
And heard the clock tick on the shelf
Except when Shep would scratch himself?

“And those times when with sudden zip,
He’d bite himself upon the hip,
Then turn his head in manner queer
And scratch himself behind the ear.
Then, like the whirlwind of the gale,
Get up and madly chase his tail?

“Well, Dad, I do not like to brag,
But since in France I’ve served the flag;
I’ll say in running down a flea,
Shep never had a thing on me.
In fact, I think I’ve learned a twist or two,
Our old dog never learned to do.

“We used to scold and put him out,
We would never let him stay about
When he began to thump the floor.
But, oh, when I get home once more,
I’ll let Shep scratch the evening through,
Because, you see, I’ve had ’em too.”

Thank God We Don't Need Your Son

You say he can't stand the Army,
The life is too rough for him.
Do you think he is any better
Than some other mother's Tim or Jim?

You raised him up like a girl.
"He don't smoke or drink," is your brag.
But if all the boys were like him,
What would become of the flag?

You say: "Let the roughnecks do the fighting,
They are used to the beans and stew."
I am glad that I'm classed with the roughnecks,
Who would fight for the Red, White and Blue.

You say his girl couldn't stand it
To send him off with the rest.
Do you think that she'd be glad
When she found a German on her breast?

Think of the women of Belgium,
Of the cruelties they had to bear.
Do you want that to happen
To your innocent daughter so fair?

You can thank God that the stars in Old Glory
Are not blurred with that kind of a stain.
Because there are ten million roughnecks
That have red blood in their veins.

They go to drill in bad weather,
And come in with a grin on their face,
While your darling sits in the parlor
And lets another man fight in his place.

Maybe we do smoke and gamble,
But we fight like our forefathers did.
So go warm the milk for his bottle,
Thank God, we don't need your kid.

Sammy

With apologies to Kipling

I went into a bar room for to get a pint of beer,
The barkeep up an' sez to me: "We serve no Sammies here!
You're wearin' of a uniform, you are an army gink,
An' men as wears a uniform ain't got no right to drink."

O, it's Sammy this and Sammy that,
An' "Sammy, You come first."
But Sammy ain't no angel, and
He has an awful thirst.
An' "Sammy, stop!" an' "Sammy, don't!"
An' "Sammy, here's the boot."
But it's "Sammy, you're a hero,"
When the Huns begin to shoot.

I went away to fight to keep this country safe an' sound,
I didn't think my uniform made me a low-down hound;
A low down hound that must go dry, an' never have no cheer,
That ain't for to be trusted with a common glass of beer.

But Sammy ain't no bloomin' fool,
An' Sammy has a vote;
An' he'll find out who made the man
In uniform the goat.
An' there'll be an awful storm
For them who made the nannie of
The man in uniform.

A Buck Privates' Paradise

The bugle call has sounded taps,
And out went every light,
So I hit the hay in my two by six,
To sleep throughout the night,
When suddenly a heavenly voice,
The night-time stillness rent,
'Twas good Saint Peter's call for me,
So heavenward I went.

It took me just one hundred years,
 I didn't journey fast,
But rather like an Erie freight,
 Or a troop train going past.
I wondered why I made no stop,
 Till I heard Saint Peter say—
"Side-track all those Generals,
 There's a private on the way."

At last I reached the pearly gates,
 In awe I looked around,
For there were forty Majors, all
 Policing up the ground,
While in dismay a Colonel stood
 From early until late,
He overstayed a one day pass,
 And couldn't pass the gate.

Saint Peter came as I looked in,
 And held within his hand,
An army service record, in
 A red tape rubber band.
He struggled and he sweated,
 And he swore a little, too,
Before he saw the record, and
 With red tape he was through.

He looked it over carefully,
 Then shouted through the door,
"You've earned your place in heaven, lad,
 You joined the Ordnance Corps,
I know you tried to get to France,
 And help write History's page,
It's not your fault you had to wait,
 Till death came from old age.

He led me gently by the arm
 Through pearly gates ajar,
Where Pilsner beer and Haig and Haig,
 Flowed freely o'er the bar.

From highballs, and from cocktails,
 He let me have my pick,
And not a drink was Hooverized,
 Each had the old time kick.

The barracks were of marble made,
 Inside were easy chairs,
And Captains fanned my fevered brow,
 While Corporals swept the stairs.
The sergeants there as porters,
 Were all supplied with mops,
And all the first Lieutenants were,
 St. Peter's kitchen cops.

The mess hall was all pink and gold
 With table-clothes of white,
And butter there, three times a day,
 And chicken every night.
The mess sergeant sat upon a stove,
 Where plainly I could see,
Him eat the beans and army stew
 He used to feed to me.

No golden harp did I receive,
 Like storied pictures show,
But instead, a silver whistle, like
 The sergeants used to blow.
I blew it loudly only once,
 And then upon the scene,
Lieutenants in blue denims came
 To load the magazine.

I had them searched for cigarettes,
 Cigars and matches too,
And had them carry twelve inch shells
 Until the day was through.
And when from lack of daylight,
 They came back from their toils,
They stayed in camp to scrub the floors,
 While I had all their girls.

And I could dress in any style,
With any girl could speak,
And three day passes I could get,
And took them twice a week.
I drew my pay just when I pleased,
No pay-roll did I sign,
And fares were just one cent a mile,
On heaven's railroad line.

A hospital was also there,
Where surgeons, weak or strong,
Got three "knocks" every morning,
And inspections all day long.
One surgeon, who had broke his legs,
Got salts and three white pills,
I had him marked for "duty"
To cure him of his ills.

Then tired from my wandering,
Upon a feather bed
I lay, no thought of Reveille,
I'd sleep till noon instead.
But all at once I felt a jar,
A voice in my ear spoke
"It's 4 A. M., third relief, outside,"
And then, Oh Hell, I awoke.

And grasped my good Lee-Enfield,
And in the morning air,
To guard the ammunition,
For the boys that are "Over there"
I walked my post and happy,
To do my bit in war,
And proud to be with Uncle Sam,
A private, nothing more.

The Sergeant

Who is that man of haughty mien,
With ample chest and peanut bean,
And movement like a Ford machine?
Why, sonny, that's the sergeant.

Who's busy as a bumble bee,
To get you up at reville,
And shouts your name in strident key?
Why, bless you, that's the sergeant.

Who yells "Right dress!" and "Right by squads!"
And gets as mad as all outdoors,
And sends you out to do the chores?
You're right, that is the sergeant.

Who carries all the world's disgrace,
Written in furrows on his face
And looks for trouble every place?
Why, that must be the sergeant.

Who cries "Fall in!" and when you do,
Says "As you were, you roughneck crew.
Fours right about, I'll pull you through!"
Why sure, that's like the sergeant.

Why does the poor boy act this way?
Will he be a general some day?
No, sonny, quite the other way,
For hell is full of sergeants.

To the Drys Back Home

We're proud of you, Old Narrow Mind,
For hitting Rock and Rye;
We're proud of you, Old Foggy,
For voting the old state dry.

You said you would be with us,
Until the bitter end;
You shook our hand at parting,
You said you were our friend.

But while we're in France, and
We're risking life and limb;
You voted the old state dry,
To please your narrow whim.

No greater act of treason,
No band had e'er to tell;
We're proud of you, Old Narrow Mind,
We're proud of you—like Hell.

But we are coming back, and
Although our ranks are thinned,
We know there'll be a "dry" or two,
Who surely will be skinned.

So gather all your dry friends,
And when they're gathered, tell
Them the boys in France are proud,
Are proud of them—like Hell.

The Reason Why

You ask me why I curse with almost every word,
Why my language is so shocking, the worst you ever heard;
Well, I'll answer with some questions, then you'll know the reason well,
Why I use such words as "damn it," or, "what the bloomin' hell?"

Have you ever stood in mud above your shaking knees,
And try to think it was not cold (and be about to freeze);
When you could not move about, nor sing, nor groan nor yell,
For fear the Hun would hear you—No? Well, what the bloomin' hell?

Have you ever held a rifle, sir, till it weighed about a ton,
And strained your tired eyes blind, watching for the Hun?
Have you ever heard them bursting, those deadly shrapnel shells,
Have you ever heard a whizz bang—No? Well, what the
bloomin' hell?

Have you seen the red lights up and felt a flutter at your heart
And felt the awful feelin' that something soon would start?
Have you ever had a comrade grasp your shakin' hand a spell,
Just before you both hopped over—No? Well, what the bloomin' hell?

Have you ever been in gas and worn a mask all day,
To take it off meant death, or your flesh all burnt away;
Have you slept in stinking dugouts with a regular bone-yard smell,
Have you slept beside a dead man—No? Well, what the bloomin' hell?

Have you ever been in "No Man's Land," the hail of death spread wide,
And seen your comrades dropping, dead and wounded at your side?
Have you felt a bayonet white hot in you as you fell,
Or a bullet plowing through you—No? Well, what the bloomin' hell?

I'm sure you see the reason now why I curse just as I do,
Why my language is so shocking to a gentleman like you.
But don't you think the things you've just heard me tell
Are enough to make one curse—No? Well, what the bloomin' hell?

My Sweetheart

I left her one day and hurried away,
To answer Democracy's call;
A tear dimmed her eye as I kissed her goodbye,
And she swore she loved me above all.

This sweetheart of mine, a vision divine,
Was the fairest that Heaven could send;
And though I did grieve, she made me believe
She'd be faithful to me to the end.

Does she dance with joy when some other boy
Says "Dearie, let's go to a show?"
Does she jump with glee and say "Come, sit near me,"
On the sofa that I used to know?
Don't think that I fear, when she's so sincere,
She is, for she vowed she would be;
Does she go out nights and take in the sights?
She does! You can take it from me!

Song of the Guns

This is the song that our guns keep singing,
Here where the dark steel shines;
This is the song with their big shells singing
Over the German lines—

"We are taking you home by the shortest way,
We are taking you out of the blood and slime,
To the land you left in an ancient day,
Where lost lanes wander at twilight time;
We are bringing you peace
In the swift release
From the grind where the gas drifts blur;
On a steel shod track
We are taking you back,
We are taking you back to Her!"

This is the song that our guns keep roaring,
Out through the night and rain;
This is the song with their big shells soaring
Over the battered plain—

"We are taking you home by the only way,
By the only road that will get you back,
To the dreams you left where the dusk was gray,
And the night wind sang of a long lost track;
We are bringing you rest
From the bitter test,
From the pits where the great shells whirl,
Through the bloody loam
We are taking you home,
We are taking you home to Her!"

The Fields of the Marne

The fields of the Marne are growing green,
The river murmurs on and on;
No more the hail of mitrailleuse,
The cannon from the hills are gone.

The herder leads the sheep afield,
Where grasses grow o'er broken blade;
And toil worn women till the soil,
O'er human mold in sunny glade.

The splintered shell and bayonet,
Are lost in crumbling village wall;
No sniper scans the rim of hills,
No sentry hears the night bird call.

From blood-wet soil to sunken trench,
The flowers bloom in summer light;
And farther down the vale beyond,
The peasant smiles are sad, yet bright.

The wounded Marne is growing green,
The gash of Hun no longer smarts;
Democracy is born again,
But what about the troubled hearts?

To Buddy

It's a tough fight for you, Buddy,
And it takes a heap of grit,
To stick and win
And keep your grin,
When you're in the thick of it.

It's no cinch for you, Buddy,
When the dreams with which you came
Melt into naught
As you are taught
The horrid, bitter game.

It's a hard pull for you, Buddy,
And oft times it looks damned blue,
But square your chin
And vow to win,
And play the game clean through.

For there's a great time coming, Buddy,
A time worth waiting for,
When Kultur's done,
And all is won,
And the boys come home from war.

Oh, she'll be waiting, Buddy,
And the lovelight in her eye,
Will shine with joy
As Her Big Boy
Goes proudly marching by.

It's a hard road for you, Buddy,
But it's more than worth the game,
To buck all fears
So Mother's tears
Will be for joy, not shame.

Sunny France

It lies on your blankets and over your bed,
There's mud in the cover that covers your head;
There's mud in the coffee, the slum and the bread—
Sunny France!

There's mud in your eyebrows, there's mud up your nose;
There's mud on your leggins to add to your woes;
The mud in your boots finds its place 'twixt your toes—
Sunny Franc!

Oh the grimy mud, the slimy mud, the mud that makes you
swear,
The cheesy mud, the greasy mud, that filters through your hair.

You sleep in the mud and drink it, that's true;
There's mud in the bacon, the rice and the stew;
When you open an egg you'll find mud in it, too—

Sunny France!

There's mud in the water, there's mud in the tea;
There's mud in your mess kit as thick as can be;
It sticks to your fingers like leaves to a tree—

Sunny France!

Oh, the ruddy mud, the muddy mud, the mud that gets your
goat;

The sliding mud, the gliding mud, that sprays your pants
and coat!

It cakes in your mouth till you feel like an ox;
It slips down your back, it rests in your sox;
You think that you're walking on cut glass and rocks—

Sunny France!

There's mud in your gas mask, there's mud in your hat;
There's mud in your helmet, there's mud on your gat;
Yet though the mud's all around us, we're happy at that—

Sunny France!

Oh, the dank, dank mud, the rank, rank mud, there's just
one guy to blame;

We'll wish him well (we will like hell) and Kaiser Bill's his
name!

The Army Nurse

I read, as a boy, about nurses
Who had luminous, starry eyes,
And held heroes' heads after battle,
And fetched such soulful sighs.

Who moved about like fairies
To cool some fevered brow,
But alas! for my boyhood visions,
A real nurse is different now.

There isn't a nurse for each hero,
All steeped in German gore;
But ere the day's work is finished,
She has cared for a score or more.

She comes with a cheery "Good morning,"
Then a word to the fellow who's blue,
And really now, it's amazing,
What her pleasant smile will do.

But gone are my boyhood visions,
For they are no longer of worth,
But through sunshine and stormy weather,
Here's the health of the Army Nurse.

Back To The Line

Trampin' along through the darkness,
 Splashin' my way through the rain,
With a chafin' pack slung on my back,
 Bound for the trenches again.

Flashes of light in the distance,
 Splotches o' red on the sky,
The sound of a shell creatin' hell
 In a convoy creepin' by.

Our line moves on like a shadow,
 Pushin' its way through the wreck,
Each man in his place, rain in his face,
 And streamin' cold down his neck.

Silent and grave, movin' forward,
 Each havin' thoughts of his own,
As we tramp the path of the War Lord's wrath,
 Where the fires of hell are blown.

Dreamin' o' home and the old folks,
 And the fields o' yellow grain,
And the old rock spring, an' everything—
 Bound for the trenches again.

Buddies O' Mine

You were right, Mr. Wm. T. Sherman,
When you uttered that message divine,
For only today I have laid them away—
Those two little buddies of mine.

We had crossed in a transport from Gotham,
To the land that the papers call France;
We had buddied together in any old weather,
Together we'd taken our chance.

And many a time in our hiking,
When I was unable to crawl,
They carried the pack that was slung on my back
With never a kick at all.

Rugged they were, tough and sturdy—
Though maybe they never would shine
In a highbrow cafe on the Rue de Broadway,
They were genuine buddies of mine.

And now that their duty is finished,
The thought that is left to console
Is: though they were rough, they were made of real stuff.
And each of them harbored a sole.

So thus when the snow fell this morning,
And keen as a whip was the air,
My buddies checked in—to a fat sergeant's grin,
Who issued me then a new pair.

Name It And You Can Have It

Quite frequent in the evenings, after "chow" is stored away,
And we sit around re-doin' the labors of the day,
'Most every subject's mentioned, from religion to baseball,
But the praisin' of their home state is the one that gets 'em all.

There's the "top" from old "Iowa," speaks of fields of "yaller" corn
And he's got a bunch of "brothers" who are all Iowan born,
To our clerk old North Dakota is the land of Home Sweet Home,
And California's blessing shines upon the Looie's dome.

The Blue Ridges of Virginia are oft eulogized by "Hank,"
While to Bill no state at all with Illinois can rank,
But Brooks will sit and "argify" in tones both clear and bold,
That the dear old state of Arkansas he's dying to behold.

Now when they start a-praisin' of the spot where they were born,
I ain't the sort of guy to crab and try to plug their horn,
For the guy who lacks the pep to boost for his home town,
Is the bird who's pretty useless in the chase for Wilhelm's crown.

But altho Pennsylvania's hills have kept me day and night,
I'll never say she holds the only spot at all that's right,
I love her very dearly but she's one of forty eight,
And she stands above no other in a real just estimate.

So when Flanders' mud is dried up and is just a memory,
I'll not shout "Dear home state, I'm coming back to thee!"
I'll jump and yell with gladness and in my glee I'll say—
"Captain, land me anywhere in the glorious U. S. A.!"

Now think it over pardner, and I know that you'll agree,
That you don't give an "ou, la la!" where you leave the sea.
They can put us off at Maine or on the beach at Newport News,
And we'll find a fitting welcome to end our warlike cruise.

Then we'll hie our way to homeland by boat or rail or "gas,"
And we'll find the same fond greetings thru every town we pass.
We're just Uncle Sammy's Yankees from the land of joy and plenty,
And here's a hope that we're all back there by the year 1920.

The Girl and The Slacker

There are times when I pause, and I look for a cause
To ponder and wonder and dream,
Of the girl back there, whom I thot would care
But I'm wrong, dead wrong, it would seem.

With vows well meant and hours well spent,
I left her and kissed her farewell;
'Twas the kiss of a traitor, and Oh! how I hate her,
This tongue, it alone can tell.

A curse on the cur and a curse on her,
For the act of the Judas of old;
She let me go for a sham slacker beau,
For his car, his home and his gold.

She knew that my love was blessed from above,
And sincere and honest and clean;
But the slacker's sweet tongue with its work well done,
Has tarnished my jewel serene.

At night at my post I have oft seen her ghost,
When she beckons me come kiss her hand;
She laughingly sneers at my womanish tears,
As I look at a golden band.

'Tis then that I feel a sorrow so real,
My heart strings well nigh burst;
And I crave for the day when I know I'll repay,
The slacker whom I have cursed.

I left my all at my country's call
To conquer the murderous Hun;
And the bullets will scream, even then I will dream,
Of a girl that slacker has won.

Oh God upon high if soon I must die,
Let it be in the defense of the right;
My soul she has killed but my body is willed
To the country for which I now fight.

Our cause is but just and fight now I must;
No brand of the slacker shall burn me;
I hope to be brave even unto the grave,
And from this let no one dare turn me.

If there's a law in the land then I sternly demand
That law on the double-faced slacker;
Who robbed me of her—the cowardly cur—
A whimpering and whining detractor.

So go, slacker fellow; you showed you were yellow,
To her whom you stole for your bride;
While you live your life with your ill-gotten wife,
When I may have honorably died.

Oh, girls of our nation, without hesitation,
Hear but one soldier's plea;
And be of true heart as we do our part
In a land far over the sea.

Our Dead

To the Navy men who gave their lives in the Great War

They do not sleep in Flanders Fields
Among the crosses row on row;
Their graves are in the mighty deep
Out where wild tempests blow.

No loving hand can ever lay
The flowers on green grass overhead;
No epitaph of praise can mark
The place where lie our dead.

They hear no more the wild alarm,
The crash of steel on steel;
They hear no more the boom of guns,
Nor the tempest's breath they feel.

They do not hear the wild winds roar,
Nor see the white caps play;
They sleep in peace—God let them rest
Until the Judgment Day.

Let's honor the men who wore the Blue,
And the White and the Dungaree,
Who gave their lives that we might have
The Freedom of the Sea.

We honor all the boys who gave
Their lives for our dear flag o'erhead;
But let's not forget the sailormen,
Who died, our boys, our dead.

Our American Legionaire

Like a warrior bold in the days of old,
He marched away to fight the foe;
To the tum-tum of drums he chased the Huns
Across the fields where poppies grow.
True to Uncle Sam, a man among men,
He played the game "over there,"
On a ship in the night he returned from the fight,
Our American Legionaire.

When the smoke cleared away after the fray
The world beheld him in wonder,
Though bleeding and torn a new man was born
In the din of warring thunder.
For his flag, right or wrong, he carried on
To a victory "over there;"
He's a soldier and friend and a man to the end,
Our American Legionaire.

Out of the war he came without glory or fame,
Our American Legionaire;
'Twas just a duty done when the battle was won,
Not for spoils of the victor's share.
To the Red, White and Blue he's steadfast and true,
Guarding Old Glory everywhere;
And wherever he goes the whole world knows
Our American Legionaire.

Passing The Buck

The Colonel has a job to do,
That's really hard and puzzling too;
He can't quite figure what it needs,
So hands it on to Major Heeds.

And Major Heeds he thinks it o'er,
And thinks it o'er and o'er some more,
And he can't quite make it out at all
So Captain Jones he takes a fall.

The captain shoves his helmet back
And puts his brains all on the rack,
But "Damn" is all that can be said,
And then it's up to First Loot Head.

Of course he "knows" but hasn't time—
The work they shove on him's a crime;
This and then lots more to boot,
So on it goes to the Second Loot.

Now Lieutenant Young is just a kid,
A baby mouth by an eyebrow hid;
A job like that would knock him cold,
He hands it down to Top Soak Gold.

The top soak, 'course, is swamped with work,
It never was his plan to shirk;
But Sergeant Reed, he's just the man,
He'll sure do it, if any can.

But that old sarge must sleep a lot,
This biz of overworkin's rot;
He gives the corp'rul loads of gas
And so that duffer takes a pass.

But corp'rul don't know what to do,
They're only built for bossing, too;
So Corp'rul Jenks he says he's stuck,
And hands it on to a common buck.

And when the job is finished right,
And all the things are clear as light,
Why, then it's found of all the Fates,
The job was done by Private Bates.

An' its passin' the buck,
An' a-passin' the buck
An' a-passin' the buck along,
An' on with the buck
With the best o' luck,
And I hope you come out wrong.

Little Kid of France

Little kid of France,
With your bashful glance,
Somber eyes askance,
 Standing in the door;
Come, be rougish, wily,
Stretch your hand, if shyly,
Be a trifle smiley,
 If there is a war.

Little kid of France,
With your funny pants,
Dare to take a chance,
 Come and get a sou;
Please don't be so chary,
Wide-eyed, and so starey,
Though we're strange and scary
 We're strong for you.

Answer

Did you give your best to this Army, old boy,
 Out of all that you had?
Did you do, then, the things you were given to do,
 Without even a murmur, my lad?

Did you whine like a pup when the order was hard,
And going rougher than hell?
Can you hold up your head with the rest of the bunch?
For your Best is your All—and it is well.

You may not have so fancied that job you were on—
And it may have been a misfit;
But if of your store you gave them the best,
If you did that, thank God, it's your bit.

Lament of The Forestry Engineers

Say!
You know it's a damn long war?
We got two service stripes and all that
But
They don't make the grub
Any better. Mostly it's
Slum and beans and
Salmon.
God!
How I hate that fish!
We've been down here in the wilderness for
A whole year,
Making slabs and sawdust and
Sometimes boards
Out of
Logs.
We've worked all day and fought
Fire all night. That's all the
Fighting we've seen—and we had
Beaucoup of that.
But
What I mean,
We have cut down some lumber.
Yeah, and we've had
Generals
And other ginks
Come down and give us
The Once Over.
The dear General

He said
Our stables weren't so
Sanitary
As he liked. And he wanted to know what
Slum was. A colonel said
We were Roses
Born to blush unseen.
We don't get no
Medals
But we work like hell.
We've had a lot of brand new lieutenants
For skippers. We taught
Them how to saw-mill, and one
Wept
Because we didn't bow down before him
And give thanks
Because he bought us cabbage and tomatoes
Out of our own mess fund.
Say!
Ain't this man's army
A queer proposition?
But at that we've had a heap of fun,
And lapped up our share of
This foolish French booze——
Lord! But I wish I had one bottle
Of real American
Beer.
Say guy—
What would you give to see
That big old statue
There in the bay,
And all the high buildings
Shining white in the sun?
And to slap your old feet
Down on that same Broadway
We used to know?
Gee, guy,
That would be hard to take.
Damn the Germans
Anyway!

Been There?

Did you ever hear a bullet whiz
Or dodge a hand grenade?
Have you watched long lines of trenches dug
By doughboys with a spade?

Have you seen the landscape lighted up
At midnight by a shell?
Have you seen a hillside blazing forth
Like the furnace room in hell?

Have you camped o'er night in a ruined town
With a rafter for a bed,
With the horses stamping underneath
In the morning when they're fed?

Have you heard the crump-crumps whistling?
Do you know the dud shell's grunt?
Have you played rat in a dugout?
Then you've surely seen the front!

As Things Are

The old home is drier now
Than forty-seven clucks
Of forty-seven desert hens
A-chewin' peanut shucks.

There everybody's standin' sad,
Beside the village store,
A-sweatin' dust and spittin' rust,
Because there ain't no more.

The constable, they write, has went
A week without a pinch,
There ain't no jobs, so there's a gent,
'At sure has got a cinch.

I ain't a-gonna beef a bit,
But still, it's kinda nice
A-knowin' where there's some to git,
Without requestin' twice.

Line Up! Fall In!

I wonder if, when I get home
To wear a derby on my dome
And strut around in civvy pants,
I'll e'er get o'er the ways of France—
This Army's style that's always been
For everything: Line up! Fall in!

Line up to simply holler "Here!"
Fall in to show them why,
Line up to get your issue stuff,
Fall in for what you buy;
Line up to get your army chow,
Fall in to bed, and then
Get ready to turn out next day
And do it all again!

I went to Paris for a rest,
From all such stuff (I thought it best)
Quoth I, "In bang up style I'll go,
(No. 40 Hommes or 8 Cheavaux),
To premiere classe I'll climb aloft
And bounce along on cushions soft."

Line up and have your pass stamped out,
Fall in to board your train,
And when, at last, you reach Paris,
Line up, get off again!
Fall in to have your pass stamped in,
And read a lot of con.
Line up for Metro tickets and
Fall in to be stamped on!

“Ah, well,” I sighed, “Right here’s the Y,
Now for a bed; tonight I’ll lie
On linen sheets, not O. D. wool.
Sir, please, a room, if they’re not full;
And you don’t mind if I turn in—”
“Ah, no,” quoth he. “Right there. Fall in!”

Line up for room and bed and board,
Fall in for all you lack.
Line up to check your pack or bag
Fall in to get it back.
Line up to find out where to go,
Fall in to find out when
Your train leaves Paris, then line up
To get stamped out again!

I wonder if when I get home
To wear a derby on my dome,
And strut around in civvy pants
I’ll find things there as here in France!
And if ’twill be as it has been
For everything—Line up! Fall in!

Line up to greet the folks and girl,
Fall in for civvy life,
Line up to get your old job back,
Fall in to get a wife;
And when you quit this vale of woe,
To pass to realms on high,
Line up to catch your death of cold,
Fall in, at last, to die!

The Ward At Night

The rows of beds
Each even spaced,
The blanket lying dark against the sheet,
The heavy breathing of the sick,
The fevered voices
Telling of the battle
At the front,
Of Home and Mother.

A quick light step,
A white-capped figure,
Silhouetted by the lantern's flame,
A needle, bearing sleep,
And sweet forgetfulness,
A moan,—
Then darkness, death,
God rest the valiant soul.

Swan Song

O you Brest camp,
O. D. rest camp,
Pearl of sea-swept Brittany;
Sun-caressed camp,
We-love-best camp,
Sure as we love reveille!

Yankee guest camp,
By-request camp,
Full o' chow an' tents an' things;
Joke and jest camp,—
You're the best camp,
Same as pigs have purple wings!

O you Brest camp,
Heaven blest camp,
Happy soldiers all about;
Joyfullest camp. . .
Hear the rest camp,
When my keeper lets me out.

A Battle Prayer

Alone upon a hill I stand,
O'erlooking trench and No Man's Land;
In night's black skies, like Northern Lights,
Pale flashes rise to mark the heights
Where Death's dark angels bear away
The souls of men who die today.

Jesus of Nazareth, from Thy cross,
Look down and comfort those who toss
And scream in pain and anguish dread
In No Man's Land among the dead;
Have pity for the wounds they bear,
Jesus of Nazareth, hear my prayer.

From Cavalry, as the hours dragged,
From cruel nails Thy body sagged,
Yet in that agony, O Lord,
Thou didst give blessed comfort t'ward
One suffering soul who with Thee died:
He who for sin was crucified.

Out there lie men who die for right—
O Christ be merciful tonight;
Wilt Thou who stilled the troubled seas
Stretch forth Thy hand their pain to ease,
Thy sons whose feet so bravely trod
Earth's battlefields, O Son of God?

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